



PRESS RELEASE

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 20, 2024
PIO@calottery.com
[@calotterypress](https://twitter.com/calotterypress)

No CA Lottery Player Has Ever Won a Mega Millions® Jackpot This High – Now Projected at \$862 Million for Tonight

SACRAMENTO – Will a California Lottery player become the first ever to win a near \$1 billion [Mega Millions jackpot](#) tonight? Will someone in another state take home the top prize or will it roll to more than \$900 million for Christmas Eve?

No one, of course, will know the answers to these questions until after tonight's *Mega Millions* draw for an estimated jackpot of \$862 million. Not only is tonight's the 7th largest top prize ever for this game, but there's also never been a *Mega Millions* jackpot this high in the month of December. If no one wins the big one tonight, the jackpot will roll to an estimated \$944 million for Tuesday.

Tonight's draw will be the 29th in this jackpot sequence, which began back in September after the last *Mega Millions* jackpot was hit in Texas. In that time, the California Lottery has raised an estimated \$58.5 million for public education just from *Mega Millions* sales alone.

"Raising money for schools is the sole mission of the California Lottery and why we exist in the first place," said California Lottery spokesperson Carolyn Becker. "It's also why we get particularly excited for jackpots to approach a billion dollars because when they do, more people are enticed to play, our sales are stronger, and we raise even more supplemental funding for public education."

For every \$2 *Mega Millions* ticket sold in California, approximately 80 cents goes to [help fund public education](#).

As tonight's jackpot approaches a billion dollars, there are also several reminders the California Lottery is offering to players. Those include:



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- **Buy tickets in person.** Sales of California Lottery tickets online or via a mobile app are illegal. Anyone who buys their tickets through a digital reseller is ineligible to win.
- **Don't break the bank. Players should stay within their financial means.** The California Lottery is committed to the highest standards of responsible gaming to prevent problem gambling. Help from professional counselors is available around-the-clock via the Problem Gambling Help Line at 1-800-GAMBLER, texting SUPPORT to 53342, or chatting online at 800gambler.chat.
- **Players should sign the back of their ticket immediately.** Doing this before the draw helps establish ownership of the ticket in the event of a big win.
- **Pay attention to the cut-off times and [prize claim](#) deadlines.** The draw entry period for *Mega Millions* closes at 7:45 p.m. on the day of each draw. Jackpot winners have up to a year to claim their prize; secondary prize-winners have 180 days to claim.

Tonight's *Mega Millions* draw is scheduled for 8pm PT, and the winning numbers are available immediately after on the California Lottery website [here](#). Final results about potential prize winners are posted online after the draw is certified at a national level, which usually takes about two hours after the draw.

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The mission of the California Lottery is to raise additional funding for public education, helping to supplement school budgets for K-12 as well as colleges and universities. **The California Lottery has raised more than \$46 billion for public schools** through the responsible sale of its games since 1985. Lottery funding for schools is largely discretionary, so administrators and educators can use Lottery money for instructional programs and services they may not otherwise afford. The California Lottery features eight [draw games](#) and dozens of new instant [Scratchers](#) games each year. More than 95% of California Lottery sales revenue goes back to the community in the form of prize payments, [retailer commissions and bonuses](#), and contributions to education. More information about who benefits can be found [here](#). As jackpots rise, the California Lottery would like to remind players that gambling should be fun. Borrowing money to play, spending above a person's budget, or using money intended for other purposes can ultimately lead to significant problems for players and their families. If a player recognizes that they have a gambling problem or if someone knows of someone who may have a problem, the Lottery recommends calling the California Problem Gambling Help Line at 1-800-GAMBLER.



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